

# **AEI Music Creates New Sound**

## **New Music Strategies for Nordstrom and The May Company Enhance the Shopping Experience for Young Shoppers**

SEATTLE, WA (March 20, 2001) – AEI Music Network, Inc., a pioneer in the customer-driven foreground music service industry, creates a new sound for specialty departments of Nordstrom and The May Department Stores Company. AEI expanded its business partnerships with the department store chains to create specialty store environments designed to enlarge customer loyalty and expand sales in Nordstrom's Brass Plum and The May Company's Junior and Young Men departments.

Each specialty department has a unique message and branding concern. All Nordstrom stores carry the Nordstrom name. May Company stores operate under 13 different trade names including Meier & Frank, Filene's and Foley's. Store branding is influenced with the use of specialized audio and, in certain cases, custom video programming provided by AEI.

AEI worked with each of the chains to help develop marketing strategies to target the 12-24 youth market for each store. Signature sounds were created for urban and suburban stores in different regions of the country.

"We know that most suburban youth follow the pulse of the latest trends in music, fashion and culture," says Michael DuKane, senior vice president-Strategic Marketing. "They tend to like current releases from contemporary artists. Urban youth, on the other hand, generally like street-savvy jams and non-stop hip-hop music."

Music industry research shows that musical interests vary by age, lifestyle, the region of the country, and whether people live in rural areas, suburbs or cities. Cultured or casual, single or kid-centered, young or mature, interested in artistic or outdoor pursuits, each factor plays a role in defining the type of music people like to hear. That's where AEI comes in. The company's music programmers, system engineers, project managers, sales executives and vendor coordinators all play a role in creating the right foreground music for each customer.

Knowing these general trends is just the beginning of music strategy development. In 1999, AEI began working with Nordstrom to create their new signature sound. The AEI and Nordstrom teams worked collaboratively to design a music strategy that enforces Nordstrom's branding and marketing approach. Work with The May Company followed the Nordstrom course and began in 2000.

Music and video are incorporated to help create a shopping atmosphere that appeals to the people in the store. Gallup polls report that 86 percent of retail customers say music makes a difference in where they shop. When people like the music where they shop, they tend to stay there longer.

AEI's business partnerships with Nordstrom and The May Company dates back to the mid-'80s and mid-'90s respectively. All the full-line stores in both chains use AEI foreground music created for the demographic and psychographic elements of their target markets. In addition, all the Nordstrom Rack stores play AEI music programming.

AEI designed a signature sound system for May Company's flagship Foley's store in North Park, Texas, that will incorporate separate zones of music.

"We wanted to find a way to attract younger shoppers to Brass Plum, Juniors and Young Men while not alienating the core shopping base," says DuKane. "This is where special design elements come into play. We create systems that allow for minimal music overlap when shoppers move from the general shopping areas into the specialty departments."

## **About AEI Music**

Operating in more than 50 countries, AEI Music Network Inc. is a world-leading provider of custom music and imaging content for businesses. AEI Music develops and markets demographically targeted music/imaging content, and designs system solutions for businesses in the fashion retail, specialty retail, restaurant, hotel, and airline industries.

AEI Music reaches more than 120,000 businesses around the globe, and more than 1.5 million homes throughout Latin America. AEI programmers produce thousands of hours of music per year at the Seattle headquarters and in programming facilities in Los Angeles, London, Amsterdam,

Sydney, and Japan.

AEI Music combines its lifestyle programming techniques with an in-depth understanding of its customers unique branding and marketing strategies to create specialized music programming. It works closely with some of today's most powerful brands including Rainforest Café, Red Lobster, Olive Garden, The Limited, Abercrombie & Fitch, Nordstrom, bebe, Tommy Hilfiger, Seattle's Best Coffee, Timberland, J. Crew, Nike, Eddie Bauer, Tullys and Pier 1 Imports.

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